

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A method to screen for ~~diagnosing~~ a breast, ovarian, bladder, colon, or lung cancer in a human ~~mammal~~, comprising:

a) determining sphingosine kinase 1 (SPHK1) gene copy number in a test sample from a region of the human ~~mammal~~ that is suspected to be precancerous or cancerous, wherein the test sample is selected from the group consisting of breast, ovarian, bladder, colon, and lung tissue, thereby generating data for a test gene copy number; and

b) comparing the test gene copy number to data for a control gene copy number obtained from a corresponding tissue, wherein a detectable ~~an~~ amplification of the gene in the test sample relative to the control suggests ~~indicates~~ the presence of a precancerous lesion or a cancer in the human ~~mammal~~.

2. (original) The method according to claim 1, wherein the control gene copy number is two copies per cell.

3-134. (canceled)

135. (new) The method of claim 1 wherein the detectable amplification is at least three-fold.

136. (new) The method of claim 1 wherein the detectable amplification is at least four-fold.

137. (new) The method of claim 1 wherein the detectable amplification is at least five-fold.

138. (new) The method of claim 1 wherein the detectable amplification is at least 10-fold.